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Security Council

Fifty-seventh year

Provisional

4677th meeting

Friday, 20 December 2002, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Valdivieso	(Colombia)
Members:	Bulgaria	Mr. Raytchev
	Cameroon	Mr. Chungong Ayafor
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. de la Sablière
	Guinea	Mr. Boubacar Diallo
	Ireland	Mr. Corr
	Mauritius	Mr. Koonjul
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Norway	Mr. Kolby
	Russian Federation	Mr. Konuzin
	Singapore	Mr. Mahbubani
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

Wrap-up discussion on the work of the Security Council for the current month

Letter dated 19 December 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1387)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

02-75183 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Wrap-up discussion on the work of the Security Council for the current month

Letter dated 19 December 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2002/1387)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

In this meeting, we shall hear statements from the five outgoing members, to be followed by statements from the remaining members.

Mr. Koonjul (Mauritius): First of all, let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this wrap-up meeting and for giving us, the departing members of the Security Council, the opportunity to share our views on the work of the Council over the past 12 months. This exercise will certainly be beneficial for the Council's future work as well as for the new members who will be joining the Council next year.

I should also like to congratulate you, Mr. President, and your delegation on the manner in which the business of the Council is being conducted this month. There is no doubt that it has been a very busy month, but we are happy to note that you have striven very hard to maintain your initial plan to end the Council's normal business today. I should also like to thank your deputy, Ambassador Franco, for the daily annotated programme that he has been sending to our Missions. That has helped us enormously in preparing for Council consultations and public meetings in a better way, with the result that the work of the Council has become more effective. It would be a good thing if that practice could be maintained in the future.

In addition, my delegation is very grateful to you, Mr. President, for having prepared and circulated a non-paper to serve as a general guide for today's meeting. In it you have asked us to assess the main contributions, political relevance, difficulties and dilemmas of the Security Council, using examples of the work accomplished during the year 2002, and to identify similar problems for the Council for 2003. I will try to follow your guidelines and will focus on a number of issues that, I believe, have been and will remain very significant for the Council.

Throughout the year, the Security Council has striven very hard to maintain international peace and security. Its commitment and perseverance have resulted in many success stories, such as an independent Timor-Leste and a stabilized and more peaceful Sierra Leone, Angola and Kosovo — to name only a few — as well as the remarkable Council action in Afghanistan. Those success stories can provide very useful lessons to the Council as it deals with other conflict situations and further complex issues.

During the course of the year, the Security Council has also made significant progress in its working methods, particularly in the area of increased transparency and interaction with the wider United Nations membership. The increase in the number of public meetings and of public briefings preceding consultations on certain issues has been highly appreciated by the general membership and has helped to break the divide between the Council and other United Nations Members. The Council should continue to give the general membership the opportunity to express their views and proposals on issues of which Council is seized. In our view, that approach remains the most effective way to obtain the greatest support of the international community for any Security Council action, as evidenced by the overwhelming response that resolution 1373 (2001) obtained through the methodology adopted by Ambassador Sir Jeremy Greenstock. Maintaining that approach, which in turn will strengthen the centrality of the Council, will be a major challenge for the Council in the years to come.

Closely linked to that is the need for the Council to be perceived as a credible and even-handed body that looks at all issues with the same objective, impartial and constructive approach. No distinction should be made, in our view, in the manner in which any particular subject is treated as opposed to another, nor should there be any distinction between one group of members and another within the Security Council. Any such divide would be harmful to the Council's long-term relationship with the rest of the international community. Council unity should remain the constant objective of every member, since we all know that the Council is most effective when it acts in unison. Consensus-building on the basis of collective interest,

rather than divisions along the lines of national interests, needs to be emphasized.

One of the major challenges for the Council in the future will be the effective implementation of its decisions and resolutions. Dozens of resolutions remain unimplemented, some of them because of defiance by members and others because they are simply impractical. Several decisions concerning appeals and urgent calls — for example, on rebel movements in Africa or even for the disarmament of Kisangani — have not been complied with. It will be necessary for the Council to address that important issue to ensure its own credibility.

As the Council discusses situations in areas affected by conflict, we rely mostly on reports of the Secretary-General and on briefings by the Secretariat or by Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, which undoubtedly are both comprehensive and extremely useful. However, our experience has shown that, no matter how comprehensive such reports or briefings are, there is much vital information that we fail to obtain. That is why we feel that it is extremely important for Council members to undertake regular field visits to familiarize themselves with the situation on the ground by interacting with the actors and the local communities. Such visits also help to create greater awareness among Council members of the real needs and expectations of people at the grass-roots level, thereby allowing for discussion beyond the purely academic level. We have found all the field missions in which we have participated to be extremely useful, enlightening and, in many ways, very effective in terms of the message that the Council sends to the parties.

We feel that the Council should consider splitting visiting missions into two or even three groups, as in that way it would be possible for such a mission to visit more places and to meet with more people in a particular country. As the Council discusses the whole question of field missions, it may wish to consider such a proposal.

With the success of the peace processes in several conflict situations in Africa, namely Sierra Leone, Angola, Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the challenge that we will face will be the consolidation of peace in those countries. The Council must work towards that objective to ensure that those countries reach a stage where peace becomes irreversible. The signing of peace agreements is a crucial stage in any process. That is the time when the prompt support of the international community is most important. It is an opportunity which we cannot miss, even though sometimes we tend to become complacent and start focusing attention elsewhere. Our experience in Guinea-Bissau and in the Central African Republic should remind the Council of the importance of peace consolidation; in this context, we feel that it will have to work in close cooperation with all United Nations agencies for peace to be permanently anchored.

A full, comprehensive and effective programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) represents another challenge that the Council will have to address next year and in the years to come. Ways and means will have to be found to deal with those not willing to undergo voluntary DDR. My delegation has always supported the voluntary basis for undertaking DDR, but at the same time we have always stressed the need to have contingency plans in respect of those who continue to undermine peace. Incomplete DDR is a source for future instability.

In the same vein, we feel that the demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of ex-combatants should be taken at a regional or even continental level, especially in the case of Africa, where there is such mobility and such "demand" for combatants. We hope the Council will give serious consideration to this issue.

The Council has been quite effective with conflicts that are already full-blown. On several occasions, especially during brainstorming sessions, we have discussed the need for the Council to focus attention on preventive measures that can be more effective and more economical. At the beginning of this year, the Council very timidly addressed the crisis which Madagascar was experiencing at that time. Currently we have been doing the same with the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire. The Council is often reluctant, lest it be accused of interfering in the internal affairs of a sovereign State, to address what we would consider to be a clear pre-conflict situation.

While we fully understand the limitations, we believe there is a need for the Council to see how it can best intervene in situations where conflicts may be averted, before they escalate to uncontrollable scale. In this regard, we feel that the Council should work closely with regional and subregional organizations and

should fully utilize their early warning systems. Closer cooperation with the African Union in the preventive field is absolutely vital. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and its Peer Review Mechanism provide the necessary framework to avert crisis situations, and the Security Council could work in helping to strengthen the institutional capacity of the African Union and in implementing NEPAD.

Mauritius will be completing its two-year term in the Council at the end of this month. Our membership has been an extremely enriching and challenging experience for us, especially in view of our size, resources and influence. But it is that very specificity which has led us to take a stand based on principles, objectivity, impartiality, sense of justice, even-handedness, fair play and, above all, consensus-building to preserve and strengthen the unity of the Council.

As one of the representatives of Africa, we have tried to focus the Council's attention on African issues and to bring a new perspective in dealing with some of the burning questions afflicting our continent. While advocating a global and comprehensive approach to problems in Africa, we have highlighted the specificities of each situation, which has to be viewed on its own merits. We are pleased with the establishment of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, just as much as with the beginning of a new phase of cooperation between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. It is our sincere hope that the Council will continue to further strengthen such cooperation in the future. As we look back on our performance, we have a feeling of great humility, as well as some pride that our modest contribution may have helped consolidate peace and international security in the world.

I would like, in conclusion, to express my Government's sincere thanks and gratitude to all members of the Council, whose assistance and support have been of immense value to us. I wish to equally thank the whole Secretariat team for their support, especially during the Mauritian presidency. Last but not least, I want to thank my own team, both those who are sitting behind me and those who work behind the scenes, for their dedication and hard work.

I would like to end my intervention by reading out a quote from former President Clinton of the United States, who has said that:

> "We have no choice but to learn to live together, to choose cooperation over conflict, to give expression to our common humanity by following simple rules: everyone deserves a chance; everyone has a role to play; we all do better when we work together; we are not as different as we think".

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mauritius for the kind words he addressed to me and to my delegation.

Mr. Corr (Ireland): May I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this wrap-up discussion on the work of the Security Council over the past year. We find this a very valuable exercise, and today it especially offers departing members of the Council a chance to give our views and assessment on the work of the Council.

I would also like to thank you, Mr. President, for the work of the Colombian presidency over the past month, and everyone in your delegation for a month of real achievement, commitment and effectiveness in the work of the Council.

There is a phrase of T.S. Eliot — "liberation from the future as well as the past" — that seems to me in many ways, perhaps with undue scepticism, to sum up the work of the Security Council. The Council stands at the very centre of the multilateral and international system, supporting cooperation by nations, anticipating and averting threats to peace, but also building peace, and enforcing peace where that is called for, conscious always of risks, whatever their shape — but, as is the duty of the Council, conscious also of hopes. This is as it should be. Internationalism is about action, not just ideals.

To serve in the Security Council, therefore, is a great honour for any country. The Council is the property of all United Nations Member States. It is the property of the world, not of its members, permanent or elected, and not of any combination of them.

What are the standards the Council must meet? How do we meet these tests, how effectively does the Council operate? Where do we stand, looking back and looking forward? Those are issues I want to address in my remarks today.

On how the Council performs its work, it seems to me there are four central tests that must be met. The Council is about, above all else, the safeguarding of international peace and security. This is the place that intersects with power and the views of capitals, some that are powerful, some less so. But collective security is about power and about the willingness to use power for the wider good if necessary.

If the Security Council is just a talking shop, its role has ended. There is always a balance there between multilateralism and the individual role of States, between national interests and the global public good. This tension meets often in this Chamber. But the Security Council is also about law. In a world where bipolar deterrence or balanced equilibrium are gone and where market forces shape much of the world in a rather Darwinian fashion at times, this is a place that says, on behalf of the international community, "It is so, let it be done". Even though the Council is intensely political, it needs to always value this special and austere role in international law.

The Security Council must also value its legitimacy; this is a political test. People around the world, as we have seen in recent months, look to the Council as a test of the legitimacy of major actions affecting international peace and security. Therefore, a sense of honour and fairness needs to be embedded in our work. We must honour our decisions when taken and our word when given. We must also honour the expectations that the international community has in us. And we must show fairness. We should not have double standards on decisions we take. It is surely wrong if war can flow from some decisions of the Council while only shrugs and indifference flow from others.

The Security Council must also be about partnership. The Council cannot do everything and yet specific decisions and issues have implications often involving the economic and social as well as the political dimensions. We need to see the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as partners and they need to view the Security Council as a partner. We need stronger partnership throughout the intergovernmental system in the United Nations. Too much light in the United Nations, perhaps, shines on this Chamber, and too little elsewhere.

How have we done in the light of these tests? In the main, in the view of my delegation, we have done well. In Africa, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo is at work. Support has been given to the Burundi peace process. Peace has been broadly achieved in Sierra Leone and Angola. Regional instability in many parts of Africa still remains a problem. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan is at work in the service of the people of Afghanistan.

Each month the Council looks at many issues on its agenda. We take decisions, rightly, when we view the time is right. That is the way it should be. But in an increasingly untidy world, where events create enormous pressure, we must stand further back from time to time and look at the wider canvas and the wider forces at work.

In Africa, as Ambassador Koonjul has just said, new and important forces are at work: the African Union, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, regional cooperation and an increasing sense of African ownership of African issues. We need to support all of this in the work of the Council, including in relation to specific decisions on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi, the Great Lakes region, Somalia and the Central African Republic. We need to remember that collective security and international peace and security are concepts. Our decisions on issues operationally are part of a wider matrix. Terrorism in a failed State can be terrorism anywhere in the world. Profound alienation, bitterness and failure to respect human rights do not end at borders.

Specifically, we need more strategic focus on the situation in the Middle East. It is a profound and growing threat to international peace and security. The situation in the occupied Palestinian territories is intolerable and unacceptable. That this situation still prevails is an affront to the international community and reveals our lack of political will in a place of deadly danger and injustice.

We also need more strategic focus on conceptual and thematic issues. There is deep and unacceptable poverty in Africa. There is alienation among many in the Arab world. There is alienation in many parts of the world because of exclusion from the benefits of globalization.

We also need more strategic focus on conflict prevention and on peace-building when conflict is over. We need the capacity to think boldly, and not just on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR).

But there are operational implications, such as how effectively DDR operates in the Great Lakes and so forth.

How do we operate? On our working methods, it has been the view of my delegation, and I repeat today, that there is too much on our agenda. There is too much of "this issue, this morning, this month". We need a more focused approach, perhaps involving setting aside one or two days a month to look at issues that have to appear on our agenda, but in such a way as to deal with them speedily and effectively instead of devoting a full morning to each of them.

We need more committees of the Council. The Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa and the sanctions Committees are examples of how effectively committees can operate. We need committees that could filter and look at in more depth the issues on the Council agenda.

We need more structured dialogue with the Secretary-General and with the Secretariat. Apart from the very valuable monthly lunch, perhaps the Secretary-General could set aside part of the day once a month for a background look at issues on the Council's agenda and at the canvas against which we must consider them.

The relationship between the permanent five and the elected 10 has been an issue of some contention over the past months and years. In my view, there has been a growing and welcome level of cooperation among the elected 10. This is the way it should be. In terms of the permanent five, my delegation has never seen any plots or conspiracy. These are the members of the Council which are permanent; they have a veto. That is the world we live in, and the Security Council reflects this.

But perception can be as important as reality. We need to address perceptions. Those perceptions can include, and at times have included, a sense that the permanent five may not always show the sensitivity to the elected 10 that is required. This is a matter of perception, not necessarily substance, but we do think it needs to be addressed in the period ahead. One way of doing this might be a monthly meeting involving all Council members away from the United Nations building, where we would look at issues in a free and flexible way.

Finally, where do we stand? In the view of my delegation, the Security Council works well. It could work better. It has come a long way in becoming more open and more transparent. It should focus more on main items on its agenda rather than necessarily dealing with all items on its agenda in a routine way. It needs to strengthen its partnership with other United Nations bodies and they need to strengthen their partnership with the Security Council. Here I am thinking of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Human Rights, for example.

Ireland finishes our Security Council with a strong sense of pride at having served. We are proud too that we have tried to highlight issues we think matter: Africa, the Middle East, human rights and conflict prevention. We leave with great admiration for all the other members of the Council and for their work in the service of peace. We leave also with a deep sense of admiration and respect for the Secretary-General, for his commitment, his integrity and his willingness to show leadership at all times. We have appreciated that very much.

In conclusion, it is right to express our appreciation to everyone from the Secretariat involved in the work of the Council, but also to the Secretariat generally for the work that is done for the people of the world with great idealism and effectiveness. This work is often not appreciated around the world as it should be.

This is a place that matters. It is, therefore, to be guarded and cherished. That was the approach we tried to bring to our period on the Security Council, and it is the strong conviction that we have as we end it.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Ireland for the kind words he addressed to me and to my delegation.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): Ten minutes to summarize two years: that is quite a challenge. I may have to piggyback to save time and say that I completely endorse what Ambassador Koonjul and Ambassador Corr have said about the wonderful work done by the Colombian presidency — by you and your team, Sir. I also endorse what they have said about the usefulness of this wrap-up session, because, frankly, if we did not have this wrap-up session we would be leaving the Council without having an opportunity to leave behind our impressions of what we have done.

We thank you very much for this, Mr. President. We also want to emphasize the point that was made both by Ambassador Koonjul and Ambassador Corr, that the Council's record over the past two years has been a successful one. Indeed, my list of success stories is the same as the ones they pointed to, so I will not list mine here.

I want to emphasize a point. We thought the most useful contribution we can make in this meeting is to suggest areas for improvement in future years. We believe, to quote an old cliché, that an organization languishes if it only has unloving critics or uncritical lovers, and I hope we will be seen as a loving critic of the Council.

We believe that all good organizations should have the three C's: a culture of action, a culture of innovation and a culture of reflection. Clearly in the Council, as demonstrated in the remarks made by Ambassador Corr, we have a strong culture of action. We deliver results. Whenever a crisis occurs the Council responds.

But frankly it is an organization that is weak in the cultures of innovation or reflection. This is what we will speak about. To bring about change requires leadership from the owners of the Council. One thing which has puzzled me is a question I raised at the Security Council retreat. Who are the owners of this Council? Is it the 15 Member States? Is it the five permanent members? Is it the 191 Member States, or is it, as stated in the Charter, "we the peoples" of the world? We cannot fully address this subject, but I hope it will form the subtext of what I speak of today.

The contribution we would like to make today is to suggest five concrete areas where we believe further improvements can be made in the work of the Council. The first area is to try to undertake a sharpened strategic overview of the work of the Council. As we all know, the Security Council has become the busiest organ within the United Nations family. It meets daily and has grown in size and complexity. Each time the 15 members meet we discuss individual slices of the Council's work, whether it is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Middle East or Burundi. But we never step back and look at the whole picture of what the Council is doing.

If you look at the whole picture, it is amazing how much the load and complexity of the work of the Council has grown in the last 10 years. For example, in any single day we can examine conflict situations across the globe from Asia to Africa. We can also move from assessing political considerations on how to encourage parties to abide by peace processes, to deliberating military recommendations on the size, shape and area of the deployment of peacekeeping operations. We can move from responding to a humanitarian crisis to monitoring financial embargos imposed by the United Nations Security Council. We can consider juridical questions relating to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), to examining the legitimacy and adequacy of Members States in combating international terrorism. This is a huge agenda that has grown in the Council.

Each time we meet, we discuss each slice and we never sit back and reflect on the Council as a whole and on how it is performing as an institution. One complete suggestion we would make — and this probably builds on what both Ambassador Koonjul and Ambassador Corr have said — is that we should find time to sit back and reflect on the overall work of the Council. We tried to do this during the annual retreat of the Security Council with the Secretary-General. But often there is no follow-up to the retreats.

Under your presidency, Sir, we had a very useful meeting on 11 December 2002, and I commend you for the record you have given us, because this demonstrates the value of such reflective sessions. Of course we can have more of such wrap-up sessions.

We should also build on the 15-plus-15 format that Ambassador Jeremy Greenstock started in his luncheon meetings, but all in all I think we need to do more in terms of reflecting on the overall work of the Council. We believe that is the way we can introduce the culture of reflection.

The second area where we can benefit from innovation and reflection is in the area of peacekeeping operations. Clearly, peacekeeping operations have become one of the most important instruments of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security. The amount of money that the Security Council authorizes to spend on peacekeeping — $3 billion annually — is much larger than the United Nations regular budget. But in the two years we have been on the Council, there has never been even one

discussion on how we go about allocating these $3 billion.

Recently there was a book launch ceremony where Professor Stephen Stedman of Stanford University, speaking of his book "Ending Civil Wars", calculated how much the United Nations spends in each peacekeeping operation per victim involved in the conflict. You get a remarkable disparity where you can spend up to a few thousand dollars per victim in the Balkans to a few dollars per victim in Rwanda. This disparity needs to be addressed because at some point, people will be asking questions as to why there is such a large gap in how you allocate your resources.

The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) has improved over the years to deal with the evolution of peacekeeping operations from purely traditional operations to complex multi-faceted missions. Our view is that the Security Council needs to catch up with the DPKO and move from purely mechanical discussions on peacekeeping operations, to more reflective discussions. We can, for example, make better use of the Best Practices Unit of the DPKO, to draw lessons of successful and unsuccessful peacekeeping operations and apply them to current and future operations. A concrete suggestion we can make here is that in our existing Working Group on peacekeeping operations we hope there will be more reflection on how decisions are made concerning peacekeeping operations.

A third idea which could benefit from innovation and reflection is, of course, the area of sanctions. We know sanctions are another key instrument of the Security Council and we have shared some of the experiences that all of us, as chairmen of the Sanctions Committees, had in the meeting you organized, Sir, on Wednesday 18 December 2002. But we do believe more reflection is needed in this area. As the Secretary-General once noted, "sanctions have had the paradoxical effect of sometimes strengthening the regime and punishing the people". And as a consequence, many questions have been raised about sanctions regimes. For example, there was an article in *Harpers* magazine in November 2002 that we should look at. Again, more reflection is needed in this area. I hope the Working Group on sanctions chaired by Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou will be able to do more work in this area.

To give one example of how improvements can be made, when we chaired the Liberian Sanctions Committee, and we put up a travel banned list, we had no personal details such as passport number for some of the names on the travel banned list. Then we discovered that another Sanctions Committee actually had the details. But because each of the Sanctions Committees works in locked boxes, there is no transfer of knowledge from one to another. Clearly this is something that can be improved upon, and something the Working Group on sanctions can look at.

The fourth area which could benefit from innovation and reflection — and I guess you will not be surprised I mention this — is the area of working methods and procedures of the Council. Here let us stress that there have been improvements; more open meetings have been held. Recent innovations include the Mexican format begun in February 2002, of having open briefings followed by informal consultations.

Clearly there is room for improvement. To cite an obvious example, as we know, the Security Council creates the most far-reaching international law, but surprisingly, it does not want to be bound by rules itself, except by a set of rules and procedures which we know still remain provisional after almost 60 years. At some point someone will ask the question: When will your provisional rules stop being provisional? There are also other areas where we need to improve working methods.

One of the things I vividly remember about working in the Council is in some ways the mechanization of the work process. Each day when we come to work, we go to the informal consultations room, we hear a briefing, sometimes with slides, sometimes without slides, sometimes we have fact sheets, sometimes we do not have fact sheets. We go through a mechanical routine of addressing each issue almost in a set formula. But often we do not stand back and ask, at the end of the day, how much value did we add in that discussion, or did we just go through a discussion for the sake of having a discussion? That is why we think, frankly, that there is good reason to activate and make more useful the Working Group on Documentation and Procedures. We are aware — speaking candidly — that there is some resistance to the idea of making this Working Group more active. We are aware that there is resistance, but we want to suggest to those who, in a sense, resist change that it actually may be in the interests of all 15 members to

have better working methods and procedures, because in that way we will learn to use our time better.

I would like to make one simple suggestion: the best way to have change is to provide leadership to that Working Group. If we could agree, for example, to have a permanent annual Chairman of the Working Group on Documentation and Procedures — that has been suggested by Ambassador Martin Belinga-Eboutou of Cameroon — I believe that we would be making a huge leap forward in that area.

Finally, I would like to refer to the most difficult issue. Indeed, I raise it with some trepidation, because I am not sure whether easy answers can be found in this area. But clearly it has to be addressed. It is, of course, the area of the accountability of the Security Council. Frankly, I do not see any answers being supplied to this question, even within the next 10 years. But I hope to plant a small seed which will grow into a tree some day.

We all know that all organizations are accountable in one way or another. Governments are accountable to their electorate. Corporations are accountable to their shareholders. The United Nations Secretariat is accountable to the United Nations Member States, who own the Secretariat. What is unclear is who the Security Council is accountable to, and what it is accountable for. There are no easy answers to that. Some have cited Article 24, paragraph 1, of the Charter, which states that the Security Council acts on behalf of the Member States, and say that the Council is accountable to the general membership of the United Nations. But the well-known book by Bruno Simma — *The Charter of the United Nations: A Commentary* — notes that the Security Council "is not subordinate to the Assembly", as the Assembly has not been granted the power to hold the Council responsible for failing to present a report in accordance with Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Charter or for presenting a deficient report, or even for any actions by the Council listed in a report.

Clearly, there are no easy answers. But even though the Security Council may not be formally or legally accountable to United Nations Member States, it is also clear that the Council does in some ways provide a service. It provides a service to the international community that is in some ways similar to the job done by the fire department — that is the most common analogy used. Fire departments traditionally react whenever a fire breaks out anywhere, at any time. But as we know — indeed, Ambassador Corr mentioned this — the Security Council has been more selective in its responses. Such selectivity can in the long run damage its credibility, and that is something that we need to address if we are trying to improve the Council.

We also believe that it is important for the Council to understand where it derives its legitimacy from. It does not derive its legitimacy on its own. Indeed, if we took the 15 Member States out of the United Nations complex and created an independent global security council with the same members, it would not have the legitimacy that we have sitting here. It is the United Nations fabric that provides legitimacy to the Council — the United Nations Charter, the regular elections by the 191 Member States of the 10 elected States members of the Council and, indeed, the general recognition that the Security Council is part of the United Nations family. But that relationship with the United Nations family must be a two-way street. The Council cannot just claim its legitimacy from the United Nations family without giving something back in return. And what it needs to give back is a sense that it is accountable to the United Nations family for its actions. Let me stress here that, given the Council's recent success stories, it has a very proud and positive record, and for that reason we should welcome the idea of accountability, rather than shy away from it.

In conclusion, I would like to join my colleagues from Mauritius and Ireland in thanking the States Members of the United Nations for having given us the opportunity to serve on the Council. We hope that we have not let down those who elected us.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Let me at the outset stress that I appreciate your initiative, Mr. President, to provide the members of the Council with an opportunity to briefly reflect on the year that is almost over and to consider what lessons have been learned that might be useful for the year ahead. This opportunity is particularly appreciated by my delegation, which — along with those of our colleagues from Ireland, Mauritius, Singapore and your own country, Colombia — is leaving the Council. The permanent five members of the Council can draw on their extensive institutional memory, but the elected members have to start almost anew every time they serve on this body. Norway last served on the Security

Council in 1979 and 1980, and both the world and the Council were very different in those days.

Our first lesson learned is thus the need for new elected members to be assisted in every way possible by other members of the Council. Elected members should therefore do their utmost to give their successors a flying start by sharing their experiences, not only on the substantive issues before the Council but also on procedural questions and on the working methods of the Council.

Another lesson learned is the importance of unity in the Council. It is when we are able to speak with one voice that the impact of our decisions is greatest. This has been demonstrated on several occasions during the past year. Unity is particularly important with regard to one of the most difficult issues before the Council — the situation in the Middle East. Decisions made by the Council in 2002 might not have had an immediate impact on the situation on the ground in that very troubled part of the world. However, the Council has been able to express views that will be important when the parties are again able to sit down and negotiate a peace agreement that will benefit the peoples on all sides. The fact that the Council has expressed a vision for a Palestinian State is important. We should continue to strive for unity in our deliberations on the Middle East. The Council will have an opportunity to do so again this afternoon and, I am certain, on several occasions in the coming year.

A third lesson learned is the need for Council members to assume a special responsibility for certain issues. The Council's workload has now become so great that we all depend on the expertise not only of the excellent United Nations Secretariat but also of other members to provide information and insight that will be useful to us all. Norway has tried to carry its share of this responsibility by trying to coordinate the Council's work on the Horn of Africa. In Ethiopia and Eritrea the Council has been instrumental in helping the parties to move towards sustainable peace, but there is still a lot of work to be done to complete the peace process and reconcile the two countries. The Council's continued engagement is needed to ensure implementation of the Border Commission's decision, and the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea still plays a crucial role in maintaining peace along the border.

In Somalia, the Council has tried to support the peace process, led by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, and to focus on attempts to limit the flow of arms to the country. However, even if the warring parties agree to a peace agreement in Eldoret, there is a distinct need for continued and coordinated pressure and assistance from the international community to ensure stability and security. We anticipate stronger coordination efforts concerning the Somalia conflict to be carried out within the United Nations framework, as well as in a regional context. The Council continues to have an important role to play in this connection, and we encourage it to act resolutely on forthcoming recommendations from United Nations experts monitoring the arms embargo.

A fourth and final lesson learned as we look to 2003 is the need to continue the work with so-called thematic issues and to make our deliberations on these issues as relevant as possible to the good work being done in peace operations around the world. Norway believes strongly in the importance of issues such as protection of civilians in armed conflict and children and armed conflict. Debates in the Council and reports by the Secretary-General on these and other issues are important in and of themselves. However, the impact is much greater if we follow up with concrete action. Norway did so in March of this year when it produced, in cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat and others, an aide-mémoire on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We hope that in 2003 the Council will also approach thematic issues with the aim of translating words into concrete action.

Finally, the Norwegian delegation would like to express its gratitude to the other members of the Council for the cooperation they have extended to us. I would like also to thank the Secretariat, and I would like to like to express special thanks to my own staff for their dedication and hard work throughout our two years on the Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Colombia.

I should like to begin by expressing my gratitude to all of my colleagues for these two years during which we have tried to contribute, with enthusiasm and dedication, to the work of the Security Council. I should like also to thank in particular the members of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for

having placed their trust in Colombia throughout the period 2001-2002.

This is an opportunity for the members of the Council to reflect on the work that we have done in the past year. Having come to know well the colleagues who have already spoken and to appreciate their abilities, those of their teams and, of course, their dedication, and having shared with them their vision of the Council - which I would like to endorse after having heard their presentations - we would prefer on this occasion to reflect on one single theme: to suggest that the functions of the Council be adapted to the new challenges that are facing it in the fulfilment of its responsibilities.

We believe that in recent years the concept of international peace and security has undergone a fundamental transformation. Historically, the Council has dealt with threats stemming from inter-State or intra-State conflicts, as was the case during the cold war and the post-cold-war period, respectively. It is clear that the Security Council still defines many threats to international peace and security on the basis of these traditional international concepts.

Nevertheless, since the beginning of the new millennium, an additional and very important step has been taken in defining these threats, whose implications we still have not fully grasped. Indeed, we have included within this group of threats those of global scope which, because of their nature, are not limited to a specific territory or to the inhabitants thereof. This has been the most notable consequence that international terrorism has had for the concept of security that is now being increasingly shaped by Council decisions.

We can easily identify the cases in which this new approach has been applied, even though our actions sometimes give rise to doubts and involve a lack of definition; this is something that the Council must remedy if it wishes to be the ideal instrument for addressing these threats.

Within these new global threats, we have included the cases of 11 September and, more recently, the terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia; the hostage-taking in Moscow; and the attacks in Mombasa, Kenya, against Kenyan and Israeli citizens. In other words, the Council has gradually fallen into a case-by-case management of the global threats posed by terrorist acts, which could indicate its own inability to act. Which cases of terrorism should be characterized as threats to international peace and security, and which should not? Is this categorization useful? Are we not running the risk of become involved in very intensive political discussions in specific cases on which there is no consensus within the Security Council? Should such a divisive issue be brought before the Council?

Everything seems to indicate that the Security Council's ability to act in accordance with its definitions of threats to international peace and security is uneven. In inter-State conflicts, it has played, and continues to play, a constructive, effective and important role, as we saw recently with respect to the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia. In intra-State conflicts, it has also played, and can play, a constructive, effective and important role, as we saw recently in the case of Sierra Leone. Both cases involve a series of problems, many of them identified by the Secretariat and also by the members of the Council. But, in any case, a certain know-how exists that makes it possible to accumulate experience and produce results.

However, the Security Council has no experience in managing global threats, and, what is more worrisome, the little experience that it has acquired seems to highlight its worst shortcomings as an institution.

We feel that the Security Council should thoroughly and systematically discuss its own ability to perform its functions in the face of these global threats, with at least the same intensity with which it discusses its reaction to threats to international peace and security that stem from inter-State or intra-State conflicts.

However, discussions are not enough. The Council must take strong and robust measures in order to enhance and fine-tune its ability to react. The cost of not doing would be to sacrifice the validity of multilateralism as an instrument for responding to international terrorism and to weaken the image of the Council in the eyes of the peoples of the world, who would see their own personal security jeopardized.

With respect to this item, we would like to stress the urgency of revising the mandate set out in resolution 1373 (2001), strengthening the universality of resolution 1390 (2002), and exploring options to create new instruments that would improve the Council's capacity to respond.

In the light of global threats that are not confined to a specific territory — as have been the ones that the Council is accustomed to considering — the United Nations must be more innovative, more sophisticated and more professional.

The Secretariat, which largely coordinates the implementation of Council decisions, must overcome its shortcomings and help to work effective to combat these new global threats to international peace and security. This Organization must not be afraid to call terrorism by its name. Leadership and ability must come from New York, because the point of reference must be here.

I should like to conclude with what is, perhaps, a basic thought on the future of the Security Council. We are ending our tenure as non-permanent members with the absolute conviction that this body is crucial for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is precisely this characteristic that require that we produce results.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Mr. Boubacar Diallo (Guinea) (*spoke in French*): First of all, Mr. President, I should like to convey the gratitude of our delegation for the initiative that you have taken in convening this end-of-year wrap-up meeting for the Security Council. It gives us yet another opportunity to engage in a wide-ranging exchange of views on our activities and to assess the progress that has been made with respect to the objectives set. This exercise should allow us to identify the obstacles that are strewn along our path, so that we can take the necessary corrective action and thereby enhance the effectiveness of our future actions.

Before getting into the heart of the matter, I would like to say how much my delegation appreciates the skill, talent and effectiveness with which you guided the Council's proceedings in December.

There is not a shadow of doubt that the year just ending has been full of challenges for our Council, challenges that we were determined to tackle in unity in order to preserve international peace and security. We have had to deal with a number of questions; some of them proved to be more complex than others. In this vein, we had tremendous success in eliminating certain trouble spots, in Angola, Sierra Leone, Timor-Leste and Eritrea/Ethiopia, for example. In all of these situations, the concerted will of the international community and the interested parties ultimately enabled us to agree to a common cooperating framework to help improve our diagnostic work and find the appropriate cure.

Even with our successes, we must not forget that many conflicts still exist, particularly in the African continent. In this respect, we are duty-bound to continue our thinking in order to find a successful outcome for each case, which is our primary calling. To do this, a participatory approach, founded on international law and enjoying the support of all of the actors, both within the United Nations system and within regional and subregional organizations, is the best strategy and one that should be strengthened. This approach should obviously include a true internal, non-exclusive dialogue, a careful programme of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and a vision extending to the entire region or subregion at issue.

The strategy just initiated by the Council along these lines to settle the Liberian problem is responding, in our view, to this approach and should be encouraged. We would like to make special mention of the Ad Hoc Working Group on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa, which through its initiatives and suggestions has enabled us to develop a framework that, if conscientiously used by the Security Council, will allow us to overcome the obstacles and find a solution to a number of delicate situations.

On another level, the sanctions Committees have contributed effectively, in their methodologies and their actions, to the recent implementation of an intelligent, targeted sanctions policy, and they have helped restore peace through pressure brought to bear on the different actors. The Groups of Experts, formed to survey the implementation of sanctions, also played no small role. In some cases, nevertheless, a great deal still needs to be done, and the experience of our success should inspire us. We have to look at how we follow up on integral implementation of sanctions.

Since 11 September 2001 the fight against international terrorism has become more essential than ever. In this respect, we commend the tremendous work done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee, whose work should be strengthened further and adapted to the different insidious forms of terrorism.

Peacekeeping operations, for their part, have been largely positive. They have allowed us to create an environment that is conducive to negotiation and dialogue, while restricting temptations and excesses and have led, in many cases, to a final peace being established. The United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH) and the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP), which have just concluded their mandates, are eloquent examples of this. Nevertheless, there are still many other conflicts, where peacekeeping forces have been present for many years without a solution in sight. It is up to us, in these specific cases, to re-define our strategy by adapting it to on-the-ground realities, which presupposes, in our view, a better coordination between the troop-contributing countries and the effective implementation of the recommendations from the Brahimi Report.

During the year under review, our Council greatly improved its working methods and established greater transparency in its activities. We increased the number of our public meetings, which allowed Member States to communicate their views on the questions under consideration. We also initiated a number of other forms of communication that enabled us better to evaluate what we are doing. Also, the Council has taken greater interest in topical themes, some of which are perhaps not, some say, within its purview, even though they do help us better understand the nature of some conflict situations. An example of this would be the questions of food security and HIV/AIDS in conflict areas. It would seem to be a good idea to us to stress the importance of Security Council missions on the ground, which should be encouraged.

Another very important sphere has to do with the implementation of resolutions we adopt. What we see is not very encouraging, because there are a number of decisions not yet implemented. We must make an effort to avoid selectivity and change this state of affairs.

All of these ideas are for us a way of maintaining international peace and security. To reach this goal, we say once again that we must have more determination and greater will, and we must be guided in our daily actions by the idea that we can only succeed in unity, which is the foundation of our credibility.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The work of the Security Council in 2002 was highly intensive, particularly in December. There was a significant increase in the number of Council meetings, both formal and informal consultations. This year the Council adopted more than 100 resolutions and official Presidential Statements. We dispatched three Council Missions to Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Great Lakes region and Kosovo. We believe that the Security Council did an admirable job with an increased workload. The meetings were topical and thematic in nature and focused on achieving specific outcomes. A result of our joint work was the adoption of a whole range of important decisions on a number of sore points on the international agenda. Still, at the forefront of the Council's work in 2002 was the topic of the fight against international terrorism. A significant part of our work involved African issues as well. The Council paid quite a bit of attention to a Middle East settlement, to problems in Afghanistan and the situations regarding Iraq and the Balkans.

Today we are bidding farewell to five delegations who are concluding their work at the Council. We are grateful to them for the concerns they have articulated about the Council's work and for their wish to fine-tune this work. We share many of these concerns. On a number of them we do not have completely congruent positions, which is natural, since in addition to the goals and principles of the United Nations Charter that bring us together, we also have national interests. The important thing is that we are united in our wish to increase the effectiveness of the Council's work as the United Nations body that has the major responsibility for international peace and security.

In speaking about the contribution to the work of the Council of the departing delegations, I would like to note the following contributions. The tireless and painstaking work of our Irish colleagues in searching for mutually acceptable solutions and consideration of the most serious problems faced by the Council is deeply appreciated by all Security Council members. Ambassador Richard Ryan and the Irish delegation overall merit the highest praise for successfully guiding the Security Council Committee on sanctions against UNITA.

We take note of the active and thorough work done by the delegation of Mauritius, particularly on African issues. The discussions in Ambassador Jagdish Koonjul's Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, too, helped us focus on many problems on the African continent and helped us generate fresh, innovative ideas.

The effective and active work of the Norwegian delegation, headed by Ambassador Ole Peter Kolby, made a significant contribution to the successful work of the Council over the past two years. Concise and concrete Norwegian proposals on various problems before us helped us reach prompt consensus among members of the Security Council. The efforts of the Norwegian delegation and of Ambassador Kolby in heading the Council's sanctions Committee on Iraq deserve high marks.

I would like to note the valuable contribution made by the delegation of Singapore, and by Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani personally, in fine-tuning the working methods of the Security Council. Singapore's approach was highly organized and concrete. We will be able to make use of many of the ideas of our Singaporean colleagues in our future work.

The current presidency is further confirmation of the high degree of professionalism of our Colombian colleagues. The Colombian delegation's work in the Security Council was very professional and focused on finding solutions acceptable to all members, even when confronted with severe differences among Council members. We note and commend the high level of leadership provided by Ambassador Valdivieso and the entire Colombian delegation in the Security Council committee on sanctions against the Taliban.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all Security Council colleagues and to wish them a happy new year for 2003. To all Member States present here today and to our colleagues from the Secretariat, we convey our sincere best wishes for good health and success.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words to the outgoing members of the Council.

Mr. Negroponte (United States of America): In September, President Bush challenged the Security Council to live up to its mandate to address Iraq's non-compliance with its disarmament obligations. The Council was entrusted with finding a solution to meet that challenge. That ultimately resulted in the adoption of resolution 1441 (2002). During eight weeks of negotiation, the Council not only included the perspectives of its members but also provided the opportunity for all States to contribute to this extremely important and ongoing process. In so doing, the Security Council has reaffirmed its important role in dealing with Iraq's threat to international peace and security.

On African issues, the Council made outstanding contributions, many of which did not make the front pages of newspapers here in the United States, but which remain extremely relevant and important to vast numbers of people on this planet. For example, the Council's swift endorsement of the July Pretoria Agreement helped maintain the momentum behind the Agreement. Our decision to expand the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and authorize phase III operations signalled our support for the peace process.

Contributing to those decisions of the Council was the Council's innovative approach to developing information on those issues. For instance, in August, the Foreign Ministers of the signatories to the Pretoria Agreement met with the Council in a formal open meeting to reaffirm their support for the Agreement and to answer members' questions. The decision not to have Council members make statements in that forum kept the focus on the Foreign Ministers and gave the Council's eventual presidential statement greater political weight.

In Sierra Leone, the Council's work in urging the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone to play a role in the successful May elections was crucial. The Council needs to give the same amount of attention now to the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which is moving towards issuing its indictments in early 2003. The security, extradition and social issues that this will raise will require the Council's consideration. The Court, which is a unique institution, independent of the United Nations system but created by the United Nations and Sierra Leone at the Security Council's recommendation, will need the political support of the Council during the upcoming months. How we respond will determine the Court's eventual success.

On the Middle East, the Council made an important contribution in 2002 by providing an agreed endgame to this enduring conflict in resolution 1397 (2002), in which, for the first time, the Security Council affirmed a vision of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders. That resolution was forward-looking and has now become enshrined in the pantheon of historic resolutions which form the basis upon which

peace will be negotiated. The Secretary-General and key partners in the international community are deeply involved, as members of the Quartet, in bringing the parties back to the negotiating table.

The challenge for the Council on the Middle East is now before us. We can remain on a constructive path that supports the efforts of the Quartet and others intricately involved in mediation in the Middle East, or we can return to the destructive practice of seeking to pass one-sided resolutions, heaping criticism on one party — that is to say, Israel. We completely disagree with an approach whereby draft resolutions seek to highlight the issue of occupation while neglecting Palestinian responsibility for eliminating terrorism. In 2002, the Council made several steps forward in acknowledging the obvious: suicide bombings destroy prospects for peace, as well as innocent lives. I would ask the question: will the Council have the courage in 2003 to take aim at those groups and their supporters that promote and perpetrate that violence and terror?

Finally, on counter-terrorism, I would like to call attention to the important work of the committee effectively chaired by you, Mr. President, in addressing the terrorist threat posed by Al Quaeda and also the continuing work of the groundbreaking Counter-Terrorism Committee chaired by my colleague Sir Jeremy Greenstock.

I would like to close with thanks to the Colombian presidency for creating an opportunity today for us to reflect, in perhaps the first quiet moment of the month, about the challenges and achievements over the past year and in the year ahead. Indeed, as five of our colleagues leave us, I salute the contributions that all have made during their presidencies, as well as during the entire period of their tenure.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the United States for his comments addressed to outgoing members.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): At the end of the year, five members of the Council will finish their term on the Council. It is very significant that you, Mr. President, have organized this wrap-up session, and we are very grateful to you for that.

I also wish to congratulate you on the outstanding manner in which you have presided over the work of the Council this month. Although the Council's working days were reduced in December due to the holidays, the relevant items of the programme of work scheduled at the beginning of the month were discussed in depth. Some of the very complicated and difficult questions were also appropriately addressed. The fact that the Security Council has been able to carry out its task in a transparent, efficient and fruitful way reflects your hard work and thoughtful planning, Mr. President, and that of the Colombian Mission. The President, in particular, gave detailed information to the members each day about the following day's work and the following stage of work, which was very useful in our preparation. I express my appreciation for that.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the outgoing members — Colombia, Ireland, Mauritius, Norway and Singapore. In the past two years, they have actively participated in the consideration of various questions before the Council and have presided over the work of the Council's subsidiary organs in an outstanding manner. We will not forget their important contributions to the work of the Security Council.

Once again, I wish to welcome Angola, Chile, Germany, Pakistan and Spain to the Council. We believe that those countries will bring fresh vitality to the work of the Council. The Chinese delegation will cooperate closely with them.

Throughout the year that will soon end, the Council has considered a series of questions in a timely manner, which has included anti-terrorism, Iraq, the Middle East and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has adopted more than 100 resolutions and presidential statements. When I say that, it does not mean that the more documents the Council can produce, the better. I merely want to emphasize that we have made substantive progress. For example, in the area of anti-terrorism, the Security Council and the Counter-Terrorism Committee have done an enormous job overall in cooperating and carrying out joint efforts to fight terrorism. We have laid a very solid foundation. That work has far-reaching impact.

Regarding the Iraqi issue, the Security Council has made fruitful efforts, and continues to do so, for the disclosure of information on the destruction of weapons of mass destruction in order to settle the question politically within the framework of the United Nations and to avoid war. Here too, therefore, we

believe that the work of the Security Council has been productive. It is worth mentioning that striving to achieve consensus through consultation has become a prominent characteristic of the work of the Council. We hope that that trend will be maintained.

African issues have accounted for almost half of the Council's agenda items. Some progress has been made this year on African hotspot issues and, in some cases, it has been groundbreaking and very significant. In the coming year, the Working Group on African issues and the Security Council can consider in greater depth and reflect on ways of strengthening coordination and cooperation with the African Union, African regional organizations and concerned African countries, so as to adopt effective measures to promote the early resolution of African issues and consolidate the progress achieved.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the President and other members of the Security Council, including the general membership of the United Nations, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Mr. Chungong Ayafor (Cameroon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this excellent initiative that makes it possible for our outgoing members to produce a kind of last work based on a two-year experience at the heart of this unique world body that, through a resolution consisting of a few paragraphs, can decide on peace or war.

At a time when much attention is focused on the Security Council, this experience reveals more than ever its usefulness and importance. Cameroon will certainly be in a better position to participate more meaningfully in evaluating the Security Council in 12 months, when it, like all five departing members, will be free from the constraints and obligations of solidarity, even complicity, that binds people who belong to the same club.

This morning I would like to focus primarily on two or three concerns. The first has to do with the decision-making process within the Security Council, and in particular the role that elected members are expected to play in the Council. The presence of permanent members in an institution is in itself a decisive advantage. It implies an almost perfect mastery of issues, procedures, practices and even of what is not said. When that permanent membership is accompanied by a particularly favourable relationship of power, there is a tendency to take advantage of that position to advance one's views and interests, sometimes to the detriment of missions of general interest that led to the establishment of the institution in the first place.

Despite appearances, there is a pattern of behaviour that is shared by the members of the Council, who, willingly or not, are often tempted to believe that agreement between five is the same as agreement between 15. The Security Council would benefit from returning to its initial composition. It is composed of 15 members, but little by little, it is becoming a body of five plus 10 members. That dichotomy can only affect the transparency and the legitimacy to which we all aspire. The most tangible example is resolution 1441 (2002). It was adopted by the 15 members unanimously and responsibly. However, as soon as it was voted on, we returned, in the implementation, to our reflexes as a club of five, of 10, of 2, and so forth. That remark is meant less to criticize the Security Council than to alert it to a problem. During the open meeting on Iraq in October, the General Assembly got itself invited — there is no other way to describe it — to the Council to say, in particular, that missions to maintain international peace and security had been entrusted to the Council more for reasons of effectiveness and pragmatism than anything else. The Charter does not give anyone a blank check, because, in the long run, it is the body that includes all Members of the Organization and has full legitimacy. The obligation to be accountable must be maintained by all of the principal bodies of the United Nations. This should also remind us that it is the members elected by the General Assembly that give Security Council decisions their democratic legitimacy. In the absence of sound practice, the Council would risk losing its legitimacy and credibility.

The other concern that I should like to emphasize at this wrap-up meeting concerns the problem of sanctions that the Council imposes against certain States that violate the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations. The Council is still searching for a global strategy for exiting sanctions regimes. It is also struggling to find effective ways of countering strategies aimed at bypassing sanctions that are used increasingly by organized crime networks. The growing criminalization of economies under sanctions also makes that difficult. The Council must,

therefore, find balanced formulas that avoid pushing the situation to the breaking point, because, once a conflict has erupted, it becomes increasingly difficult to return to normal economic and social life in the countries concerned.

That just balance, in our view, is also indispensable for the management of sanctions in a strict sense. Indeed, many examples show that sanctions generally have a more devastating impact on vulnerable populations — women, children and the poor — than on the regimes in place. Thus, we must do a better job of taking the humanitarian dimension into account when the Council makes decisions concerning sanctions. A formula that is beginning to bear fruit — and that we should certainly stress more — is the targeting of sanctions at very specific objectives. In any case, the sociological tailoring of such targeting should be discussed. The Council must have a substantive debate in the near future on the impact of sanctions on the populations and economies of third-party States whose only mistake is to be a neighbour of States that are at fault.

In conclusion, I should like to raise a subject that is important to my delegation and is particularly topical. In addressing situations of civil war or internal conflicts that pit democratically elected Governments against rebel movements or, more generally, against armed oppositions, the Council has — because of its passivity and a certain complacent condescension — sometimes left the impression of having surreptitiously legitimized certain rebel movements. That problem needs to be explored; it is a source of great concern to which the Council should find an ethical and adequate response.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this wrap-up meeting to discuss the work of the Council. We have listened attentively, particularly to the statements of the representatives of delegations whose Council tenure will conclude at the end of this year. We reiterate our thanks to your delegation for presenting accurate daily information to Council members concerning our work programme, a practice that we believe should become permanent within the framework of improving the Council's working methods.

This meeting coincides with the end of the year, which allows us to review and assess our work, not only over the past month but throughout the year. Here, we should like to express our appreciation to the representatives of the five States that will leave the Council in a few days' time for their great contributions to its work, particularly in the area of developing its working methods and procedures and in carrying out its responsibilities through the adoption of many important and historic decisions. Because Syria still has a full year and a few days until the end of its tenure in the Council, we promise to present further comprehensive views with regard to the Council's performance at this time next year.

The importance of today's meeting is based on our deep conviction that we all must strive to improve the Council's performance and its working methods, so that its work can become more transparent and more effective, which in turn will enable it to address the challenges that are included on its agenda, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter. Here, we must add that respect for the Council's working methods and equal treatment of all its members are crucial in order to preserve the Council's unity and credibility. We would have liked to have had the compulsory procedures and working methods of the Council followed in dealing with the Iraqi declaration, since we made our position clear in that regard in a letter that was circulated as a Council document. We are hopeful that the Council will rectify the error that was made, particularly since a large number of its members stated in our recent consultations their desire to receive a full copy of the Iraqi declaration in order to form their opinion and views independently and responsibly. This is also important in order to maintain the unity of the Council's work with respect to significant issues, as has been affirmed by many Council members.

It is well known that we have achieved tangible progress in the area of the transparency of the Council's work. The Council has held an unprecedentedly large number of open meetings, and non-member States have participated in the Council's work more than ever before. They had the opportunity to express their views with regard to the political issues being discussed and to express their vision for finding solutions for these issues. The Council has also held a number of wrap-up meetings in which members and non-members reviewed its work.

The Council has achieved tangible improvements in the past period. Having regular briefings on the

situation in the Middle East was one of the achievements that deserve mention here. The Council, throughout its working years, did not have such an opportunity to discuss the situation in an explosive region that constitutes a real threat to international peace and security. At the same time, we should all be aware of the fact that the Council has not followed up on the implementation of a number of its resolutions which negatively impacts its work and prevents the achievement of real progress to reach a settlement in this and other regions that are conflict-ridden.

Dealing with Council resolutions and the importance of implementing them should be based on equality and a single standard. Syria considers international legality, as represented by the United Nations and all its bodies, including the Security Council, which is responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, as one of the main pillars on which it relies in seeking a comprehensive and just peace, particularly in the Middle East, and generally in other conflict-ridden areas of the world.

In this context, Syria views any attempt to keep the Council from dealing closely with the issues relating to the Middle East, under different pretexts, a matter that is not just improper, but actually contradicts the concept of collective security, the Charter and the willingness of the international community to cooperate to find solutions for the challenges faced by our world.

We believe strongly that any attempt to equate the Palestinian people, who are subject to a hateful and continuous Israeli occupation with the terrorist policies of the Israeli Government that contradict a just and comprehensive peace is a clear and flagrant contradiction of the Charter. This is an unacceptable violation of the United Nations role, and of that of the Security Council.

The Israeli occupation of our land, which constitutes the highest form of terrorism, is a question that our Council should confront when there is a discussion of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is a matter that should be terminated as a matter of priority in the Council's work in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, instead of talking about alleged terrorism undertaken by the Palestinian people, who are the real victims of Israeli terrorism.

The Security Council has made great efforts to deal with African issues in order to reach a settlement for conflict-ridden areas. The establishment of the Working Group on the prevention and settlement of conflicts in Africa, which was headed by Mauritius very seriously and efficiently, helped to consolidate the role of the Council and contributed to dealing with African issues. The Council has followed up on the developments that have occurred in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and has given specific importance to Somalia during the period under consideration. We still have a lot to do in this area. We would like to state here that the Security Council's missions to conflict-ridden areas have contributed largely to ending these conflicts and to reaching a settlement, because it has allowed members to get acquainted with the real situation there.

The Council has also discussed many substantive issues in the areas of peacekeeping, women, security, peace, children and civilians in times of war, as well as the issue of terrorism. The Council has achieved many successes in dealing with many of these issues and has achieved progress that cannot be overlooked.

Syria will continue to work actively to consolidate transparency in the Council's work and looks forward to more serious work to improve the machinery of the Council and to make it more credible and responsive to what the Charter states.

Mr. Tafrov (Bulgaria): Allow me first of all, Mr. President, to join the previous speakers in extending to you and to the entire team of the delegation of Colombia our warmest congratulations on your able guidance of the work of the Security Council during the month of December. You have coped with the challenging tasks before the Council in a remarkable manner, in spite of the fact that the Council's programme during the month was a truly busy one.

This wrap-up session of the Council has, in a way, a unique and symbolic character, since it is being held at the end of the year, when the time is most appropriate to look retrospectively at what has been achieved and what has not during the past year. In addition, it is time to listen to the views of those non-permanent members that are leaving the Council. These views are truly valuable, since they give a succinct review of a two-year experience, on which the Council could build in its future activities. Since the previous speakers have already covered most of the areas

relevant for this discussion, I would like to focus briefly on several issues that we deem important.

With regard to the programme of work, we share the view that during the past year the Council has dealt on a continuous basis with a series of complex political and security situations, achieving positive results on a number of cases. The most convincing of these are the progress achieved in East Timor, the excellent work on Afghanistan, the improvement of the situation in Sierra Leone, and the progress in the Balkans in the context of the successful completion of the United Nations missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Prevlaka.

The enormous amount of work done by the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Committee established under resolution 1267 (1999) aimed at insuring the necessary conditions for full implementation of Security Council resolution 1373 (2001) also definitely deserves a positive assessment. The biggest portion of the Council's work was devoted to conflicts on the African continent, although with mixed results.

Significant progress was achieved in the resolution of the conflict in the Great Lakes region, which is probably the most complex of all conflicts in Africa. This is a conflict where the Security Council can make a difference. The Council remained, throughout the year, in constant contact with the parties. The mission to the region in May, and the high-level meeting with the parties in September in New York, were positive contributions to the coordinated efforts of the international community to bring peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region as a whole. In 2003, we have to continue to be proactive on this issue in order to consolidate the peace process.

While the situation in Sierra Leone in 2002 has considerably improved, thanks to the action of the Council, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone and the commendable efforts of the United Kingdom, the Council will have to follow closely the unstable situation in neighbouring Liberia. Considerable strides were made in the peace process in Angola. The United Nations peacekeeping efforts with regard to Ethiopia/Eritrea are encouraging too. We have to continue to work hard on all these issues next year.

Despite the achievements of the "facilitation and the regional" initiative, the situation in Burundi still demands close monitoring by the Council. We also have to closely follow the developments in Côte d'Ivoire.

The commencement of the second phase of the Somalia reconciliation process is a significant step forward. The Council should continue to attach priority attention to the situation in this country with a view to finding the appropriate means to reverse the process of sliding into turmoil in that part of Africa.

On the activities of the sanctions committees, we listened carefully to the briefings of the outgoing chairmen only yesterday. The views expressed, the lessons learned and the recommendations on possible improvement of the methods of work should definitely be taken into consideration in the Council's future activities. Important contributions in this direction could be made in the working group on sanctions, which has resumed its work but still has not achieved real progress on the recommendations made.

With regard to its working methods, the Council should definitely continue to build on the positive results already achieved, namely in the area of more openness and transparency, as well as in its interaction with the media. Strengthened cooperation with the other United Nations organs and bodies on the basis of a comparative advantage and adherence to the respective mandates should also be commended. In this regard we consider that the positive experience of the work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa and its interaction with the Economic and Social Council could be explored further.

Finally, on the issue of conflict management, we support more focused attention on the Council's future activities on the connections between conflict prevention and conflict resolution and the work to promote sustainable development. In this context devising appropriate exit strategies is of critical importance for the successful post-conflict reconstruction and development.

In conclusion, I would like to use the words of Mrs. d'Achon of France delivered last year at the 4445th meeting, on the same occasion, when Bulgaria was sitting at the side bench and preparing for membership in the Council:

> "This is a time for saying *au revoir* — though certainly not *adieu* — to the five non-permanent members that are leaving the Council.

of course, we will continue to work with them outside the Security Council and use to the maximum their experience and expertise."

Mr. Aguilar Zinser (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express our gratitude to the delegation of Colombia for having included in the Security Council's programme of work for December this public meeting to have a wrap-up of this body's work during 2002 as well as to identify the challenges and pending tasks of the Council for 2003. This meeting has also been an ideal occasion to listen to the assessment of the non-permanent Council members who are leaving this body on the last day of December.

The Council is made up of 15 members who represent their countries and regions. In carrying out the Council's tasks, they try to reconcile their national interests with the collective interest and the joint responsibility of enabling this body to defend international peace and security above particular or specific national interests. This tension between national interests and collective responsibility — which we all have in the Council — has been a recurring theme in the course of this year. We have to acknowledge the valuable contributions made from their national perspectives by the five countries leaving the Council at the end of this month.

In this respect, I would like to state the gratitude of my delegation for the sustained and persevering work of the delegation of Colombia in several items and for the leadership that has shown in some of them and that has taken on a particular importance. We would like to thank Colombia for the work in the area of small arms and light weapons, which is a legacy that cannot be abandoned by this Council.

In the year 2002, the Security Council stepped up its meetings and important responsibilities and made its working programme broader and more inclusive. This is something that comes up year after year. The Council assumes these responsibilities with the experience and desire to participate actively in the tasks of peace and the promotion of international security. At the same the Council this year has perhaps become much more visible than it has ever been in the past. The attention of the world's mass media is sharper and more sustained with regard to the Council's daily work on the specific matter of Iraq.

This has given the Council an identity in international public opinion which perhaps it did not have before. But it has also placed the Council under the scrutiny of the Members of the United Nations, who today more than ever would like to see the Council respond with a greater sense of responsibility and with transparency to the tasks entrusted to it. The members of the United Nations also hope that there will be closer communications between the Security Council, other United Nations bodies and the different States that are not members of the Council but whose concurrence is essential in carrying out our tasks.

In this respect, Mexico is firmly in support of greater transparency in the Security Council's working methods, particularly with regard to the deliberations on substantive items of the programme of work. We have not achieved the transparency in our working methods that the United Nations community would like. But we have made important progress this year in having a large number of information meetings on different items, at which the Secretariat shares its points of view with the Council, become public. We would also like the substantive deliberations to become more public to the extent that that is possible and desirable. With respect to working methods, the Council has made progress in looking for formulas that would make it possible to streamline its decision-making process, to make it more democratic, and — why not say it — more subject to controls and responsibility.

In this respect we must note the work done by the delegation of Singapore this year, and throughout its two years on the Security Council. This was a special contribution that leaves an important legacy: the delegations that must continue the tasks of the Council should maintain this intensive quest for more effective working methods, to broaden the scope of our work, ensuring that it more properly reflects the realities, with better information systems for the Council, while fostering a more flexible exchange of ideas and points of view. Part of the ongoing concern of Ambassador Kishore Mahbubani and his entire delegation during the past year has been to ensure that the Security Council would be able to responsibly comply with its tasks.

To that end, they sought initiatives and working methods that were different. There was also a central concern that the Security Council have closer links with the General Assembly through its reports and through its ties with other United Nations bodies. We have to continue working along these lines. We have to

go further in many of the initiatives which were outlined and are on the table, and on which Ambassador Mahbubani and his team provided leadership that left a very important mark on the Security Council.

This year the Security Council took decisions on major conflict situations, maintaining the principle of unity and consensus. This is perhaps one of the most important achievements that we have to celebrate here. There were very few occasions on which the Council's votes were divided. The unity and consensus achieved by the Council reflect the maturity with which States shoulder their responsibilities, as well as the introduction of working methods and formulas which make it possible to achieve such consensus.

In this respect, Mexico has supported and advocated the idea that the Middle East, including the Palestinian situation, would be considered periodically by all the members of the Security Council, both in public briefings and in consultations. The presence of the situation in the Middle East as an ongoing item on our agenda undoubtedly represents important progress in the search for agreement and consensus in that region, which is afflicted by a conflict which sometimes seems to be unresolvable. We hope the Security Council, by keeping its finger on the pulse of the Middle East and by holding monthly consultations, will provide elements to increase peace and stability in the area. Through these regular consultations, perhaps we can make a contribution to the peace process which is being promoted by the Quartet in the search for a just and lasting solution which could be achieved through the recognition of two States living side by side within secure borders and in conditions of peace and understanding.

We are also pleased with the fact that in the course of the year the Security Council has given timely follow-up to the situations of other countries or regions in conflict, such as the Great Lakes region, with an emphasis on the political process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as the region of West Africa.

The Security Council has had an important role in the progress made in the peace process in Sierra Leone as well as on considering the internal conflict in Liberia and the emergence of new areas of tension in Madagascar and in Côte d'Ivoire.

We would like to emphasize the importance of mediation efforts, whether related to specific Member countries or to regional or subregional organizations in Africa, in finding solutions to crisis situations in the region. Here, we would like to mention the work done by the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa. We believe that the leadership shown by Ambassador Koonjul of Mauritius and his entire delegation fully justifies the establishment of the Working Group and makes it necessary that it continue its work in order to establish the links between the Security Council, regional organizations and the countries of the region, with a view to anticipating events and to promote initiatives and attitudes which would strengthen the capacity of African organizations and countries to reach agreements and to achieve peace and stability in the region.

As it considered the various situations of countries in conflict, in 2002, the Security Council highlighted the need for greater cooperation and coordination among the various actors in order to deal with the dramatic repercussions of these conflicts, and, in particular, in order to tackle the humanitarian situation of the flow of refugees and internally displaced persons and especially the situation of women and of child soldiers.

In this context, Mexico would echo the statements of those delegations who have said here that we need greater coordination and cooperation between United Nations agencies and regional and subregional organizations. In the same vein, we should make special mention of the fact that the international community must continue to support programmes of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in post-conflict situations, in order to prevent the re-emergence of tension and of factors which would endanger progress in the peace processes.

In this respect my delegation would like to acknowledge the tireless efforts carried out by the delegation of Norway and by Ambassador Kolby in dealing with specific situations and in stressing the use of the Security Council's capacities in areas related to peace in Africa, in particular with respect to Somalia, Ethiopia and Eritrea. Ambassador Kolby's departure will leave a leadership gap in this area which the other members of the Security Council will have to make an effort to fill.

With respect to promoting human rights and humanitarian causes, we must make special mention of the delegation of Ireland which made an ongoing contribution to the Security Council's work in this area. Here, we should also stress the Irish delegation's important work in the Angola sanctions Committee, which enabled the Committee successfully to conclude its work recently.

One of the success stories of the United Nations and of the Security Council in 2002 has been the situation in Timor-Leste. Undeniably, the United Nations has made a beneficial contribution to the establishment of a new independent State and to the formation of a Government and of administrative, security and defence structures.

We regret the recent events that have taken place in Timor-Leste, but we believe that the institutional basis set up by the United Nations provides a guarantee that those clashes and any subsequent ones can be dealt with peacefully and with respect for the rule of law. We must, however, keep the Council constantly involved in that region.

Lastly, I would like to comment on the sanctions regimes established by the Security Council. I, in my capacity as Chairman of the sanctions Committee for Sierra Leone, and my delegation visited the Mano River Union region last June, when we had the opportunity to speak with regional players in that country and in Guinea and Liberia. As a result, we gained a much greater understanding of the scope and the functioning of the sanctions regimes, as well as the conditions in which the sanctions are implemented and the violations that they are subject to.

I would like to stress the importance of the Chairmen of sanctions Committees becoming directly involved in the work by visiting the region and becoming familiar with the specific circumstances there. As Ambassador Mahbubani said, there is sometimes a great deal of confusion and ambivalence in the public's perception of the work of those Committees and of the meaning of sanctions. We must bear that in mind and constantly review them in order to keep those regimes active.

In this context, we support the statements made by various members of the Council that the Secretariat be provided with adequate human and budgetary resources to enable it to support the work of the sanctions Committees and monitor the sanctions regimes, to draw upon lessons learned and to develop an institutional memory — an archive based on the research of expert groups and the work carried out by various committees. In strengthening the institutional tasks of the committees and setting up mechanisms to ensure common understanding of responsibilities, my delegation promoted the tripartite meetings between the sanctions Committees related primarily to diamonds.

One pending item for Security Council consideration in 2003 is the validity and relevance of the criteria and objectives of the sanctions regimes imposed on Liberia and Sierra Leone in the light of the political progress made in those countries.

The recent discussion that the Council held following the lifting of sanctions on UNITA in Angola should provide a model for other countries in West Africa. We must prevent sanctions regimes from becoming permanent or dysfunctional, and we must therefore revise, taking timely and proper measures in that respect.

In conclusion, I would like to express the support of Mexico for the practice of holding wrap-up meetings, which I hope will be continued in 2003. It is also desirable for us to hold annual wrap-up meetings such as this one in order to strengthen transparency, which directly benefits the members of the Security Council and strengthens our Organization and our ties with the other States Members of the United Nations.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of Mexico for his kind words addressed to me.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): I would like to focus — as you, Sir, have asked us to — on the institutional aspects of our work over the past 12 months, to pay particular attention to what the outgoing members of the Council have said this morning and to make some additional comments. By way of preamble, may I also say how much we appreciated the freshness and vigour which the outgoing members of the Council brought to the discussions of the Council. They have made us think about how we are doing our work in a way which we do not often do — and we are continuing that this morning under your presidency, Sir.

The agenda is becoming overloaded and I very much share the feeling of the Irish delegation that there

needs to be a way of continually filtering what we do. I think that we have had some useful innovations this year. More of the management of the agenda is going to coordinators and there have been fewer obligatory meetings with the Council presidency at the beginning of the month to go over the agenda, which can be done before we reach the beginning of the month. I also found the daily e-mails of the Colombian delegation, sent by Andrés Franco, to be extraordinarily helpful in pushing us towards what needed to be done each day and giving us notice of the changes in the mind of the presidency about how we needed to deal with the agenda. All of that was innovation in the right direction.

I would also like to pay tribute to our experts. There is an increasing tendency to deal with texts outside informal consultations and for ambassadors not to spend their time and competence on them; our experts seem to do it better. The fact that that tendency is increasing is also very welcome.

This morning several members — particularly the outgoing members — have referred to unity in the Council. I think that, when we can get it right, this is a very real evolution of compelling impact. But we must not forget that unity of result depends in the end on what happens in capitals and the perceptions there. We need to go on ensuring that our ministers understand the need for collective action through the Council as much as we appreciate it among ourselves, because we cannot produce unity if we do not get instructions to do so.

That element has to be remembered. I think that resolution 1441 (2002) was a striking example of that, not least because, if I may say so, the two countries at either end of the spectrum of debate on that issue — the United States and Syria — both came to conclude that unity in the Council was what they were looking for. If we learn the lessons of that and apply them — not only on that subject — in the future, then I think that we will increase the power, effectiveness and legitimacy of the Council.

We are not just an isolated Council. We have to deal with the Secretariat, people on the ground and Governments, as well as other organs of the intergovernmental system. I think we have made progress on the relationship between the Council and the Economic and Social Council this year. I particularly appreciate the fact that the Guinea-Bissau mission was a combined mission, reflecting also, if I may say so, the excellent work done by Ambassador Koonjul with the Ad Hoc Working Group on Africa — another innovation, which he steered very successfully this year and which needs to be taken forward.

How we organize that sort of thing has an effect on our follow-up. Ambassador Mahbubani said this morning that the cultures of action, innovation and reflection were very important to the Council, and that the Council was not good on all of them. I actually think that we have been quite good at innovation and reflection, as well as action. What we have not been good at is follow-up and implementation. That is where the Council is really being tested as we become more professional in our mandates and in our discussions. I think we need to talk a little more about that and, indeed, act on it. I may come back to that in one or two respects.

In your intervention, Mr. President, you referred to the Council's work in combating terrorism, because we lacked time for a more considered discussion of that is sure when you had the breakout meeting the other morning. I want to share and, indeed, reinforce, your view. The Counter-Terrorism Committee is doing quite a lot of bureaucratic work on counter-terrorism, which is important. I am not trying to downplay that; why should I try to do so? But the Council is in danger of taking its eye off the ball that really matters, which is stopping terrorists.

I am not sure that the Council is grappling with the phenomenon of terrorism in all its aspects as substantively as it should. I think that we should have a discussion of this in January, if the French presidency will allow it, because, if and when the next really big incident happens and the Council has not proved yet to be particularly active in stopping terrorism on the ground, people will start throwing stones at us.

Therefore, Mr. President, I fully agree with your focus on that particular issue. It has to be a concern of the Council beyond the work of the Counter-Terrorism Committee.

Allow me to get myself into trouble over the question of the permanent five, which the Ambassador of Guinea in particular focused on. He did continue a bit of a myth about the amount that the permanent five do before we come into the Council, which we have done only on Iraq this year, and necessarily on Iraq, as I think most members of the Council have realized. But

I do not think that the split, if you like, between the permanent five and the elected 10 affects, or is related to, transparency.

I think that the Council has become more transparent, and that is not a permanent five issue. With respect to legitimacy — if one wants to underline the politics of this, and that is why the United Kingdom supports reform and enlargement — we must not forget that an element of the political legitimacy of the Council is also professionalism. That is something which it is obligatory for the permanent five to introduce and which we discussed in the break-out meeting the other morning.

Non-permanent members of the Council talk about this, but I am not sure that they do very much about it. That is why I think that we should pick up the suggestion made by Norway — on which Ambassador Kolby and I agree — that there should be more of a tendency to take lead nations for a particular subject, and the non-permanents should be in the lead on that.

In my observation of the Council's work over the past four years, and in our own experience in the United Kingdom, it is extremely difficult for delegations on the Council to cover every subject evenly, fully and professionally. There is too much going on, and therefore there ought to be a division of functions, so that the professionalism of spending more time on a particular subject comes through.

Therefore, rather than just talking about it and re-mouthing it every time we have a wrap-up session, we ought to do something about it. I wonder whether the non-permanents at the beginning of next year might like to get together among themselves and see whether they would like to take that forward, because I think that it would help.

Ireland made a suggestion that we should have more meetings away from Headquarters, of the kind that was held the other day. I remember one or two comments at the end of that meeting about the usefulness of what we had just been doing and the role of informal consultations. We behave in informal consultations rather as we behave in here. In fact, I rarely see any difference between the style of our presentations between the two meetings, and the real purpose of informal consultations has drained away. We think that we are doing something, but actually we are not doing as much as we often do in open meetings.

Therefore, Mr. President, I think that is a theme that came out of your meeting, which you have commented on in your excellent paper — written in brilliant English, if I may say so — which we should take forward. There are themes here that you have written down for us which should not just go on the shelf. I would like to continue these discussions, perhaps, with a lunch early in the new year, so that the old members exiting can come and join us and share their experiences again. But I think that we need to talk a bit about how we use informals and whether we need to get really informal by getting away from Headquarters now and again.

Finally, Ambassador Mahbubani of Singapore, says, paradoxically, that we have not done much by way of innovation, when he, perhaps, has been the most innovative of all 15 of us over the past few years. But let us not look for institutional innovation; that is too difficult in this Organization. Let us look for practical innovation, which he has been so good at, and then we might actually be getting somewhere — get away from the institutional habits and get into practical innovation of what needs to be done, because there is a situation on the ground that needs it. There, I think, our growing habit of outside discussion would actually be exceedingly useful.

I have used up my 10 minutes, but I think that there is a lot there to follow up, and let us see if we can do it in the new year.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the Ambassador of the United Kingdom for his kind words, especially those addressed to the outgoing members.

Ms. d'Achon (France) (*spoke in French*): I will probably not use my full 10 minutes, because, within the framework of the progress that we are making with respect to enhancing the methods of work of the Security Council, later on we will be having a lunch with the Council coordinators at which we will have an exchange of views on the programme of work for January.

I would, however, like to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this meeting. I would like to associate myself with the tributes that have been paid to your presidency, and we will, of course, take into account any ideas you can give us for next month.

We believe that this meeting has been particularly useful, although it is, of course, a sad occasion to see

our Security Council colleagues leave — colleagues with whom we have forged bonds of friendship and of — I hope — productive work in many areas. Each delegation, with its areas of specialization and its particular sensitivities, has brought to the Council an interesting and productive vision, and, as our colleague from the Russian Federation has stated, each one made a major contribution.

Many very important ideas have been expressed today by our departing colleagues. As Ambassador Greenstock said, we must make sure that they do not remain a dead letter but ensure that they are taken into account and, going beyond a conceptual framework, we must try to translate them into reality next year.

I will not go back to many of the areas that were alluded to by several delegations, but I would like to recall, in the context of the work that we have done in 2002, the great attention that the Security Council has focused on the question of Africa. Each month these questions make up almost two thirds of our work. True, as many delegation have stressed, many successes have been recorded — Angola, Sierra Leone, Ethiopia/ Eritrea, and the African Great Lakes region, to which the French Ambassador led a third mission.

It is true that these questions will remain on our agenda in 2003. We are concerned in particular by the situation in West Africa at this time. Indeed, the questions of Liberia, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, as well as Cote d'Ivoire — topics we will begin to deal with this afternoon — will continue to be a great concern to us.

As has been noted by many delegations, we have made quite a bit of progress in the fight against terrorism and on the questions of Afghanistan and Timor-Leste, but even there the Council must remain extremely vigilant. We fully agree with the proposal made by Ambassador Greenstock that we should examine in January what we have done in terms of fighting terrorism.

As to the challenges that we will be facing next year — you had asked us to think about this issue, Mr. President — one does not need to be a visionary to see that, at the beginning of the year, we will continue to be seized of all the questions of which we have spoken.

Mr. President, you asked us to think about the challenges of next year. One does not need to be a seer to know that all the files we have mentioned will continue to keep us occupied from the start of next year.

I would like to pick up on what the Ambassador of Singapore said about continuing to give some thought to a permanent sanctions mechanism. This would allow us to better share information, as he emphasized, and it seems important to us that the Council should continue to think about the sanctions sector.

Finally, I wish to note that there has been greater transparency in the Council's proceedings this past year. We have made a great deal of progress, which was partially recognized by the members of the General Assembly when the annual report was presented, and we have to continue the good work that we initiated in this area.

As other delegations have said, it is true that the Council's workload is such that we are practically at the saturation point in our monthly programmes of work. As the Norwegian Ambassador said, we must continue to think about this so that we can progress in the rationalization of the work that we do, including trying to find better working methods. We have to be more imaginative; we cannot remain content to continue applying the same methods as our workload continues to grow.

I do not know if it is through the Working Group on Documentation and Procedures that we will be able to do this, but it might be accomplished on a daily basis, through practical thinking, and maybe, as some delegations have said, by asking some countries to take the lead in discussions on specific topics — the matter of "lead nations" — and maybe also by ad hoc working groups of the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Before concluding this meeting, I would like to inform Council members that the special document which was spoken of here on 11 December will be distributed as an official document, especially for the benefit of the non-members.

The Security Council has thus concluded the meeting. Simply to give you an idea of the timing, I must tell you that, on average, we did comply with the maximum 10-minute period for each statement. We would have liked it to have been shorter.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.